

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12, 17-21, 23 and 24 are pending. Claims 1-12, 17-21, 23 and 24 stand rejected.

Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. Claims 9 – 12, 17 – 21, 23, and 24 have been cancelled. Support for the amendments is found in the specification, the drawings, and in the claims as originally filed. Applicants submit that the amendments do not add new matter.

Specification

The Examiner has objected to the specification due to a number of informalities. The Examiner states

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: a. The item numbers in the specification that reference specific parts of the drawing figures are not delineated in a clear matter. The applicant is requested to punctuate the indicated drawing item numbers so that they can be easily read. Some examples are page 13, line 19: “104,106,108, line 17” “wafer 1, 208”, etc. b. The drawings submitted by the applicant corrected a duplicate numbering problem, indicated in the parent application, by changing the “chart” reference from “818” to “816” in figure 8 and updating the specification accordingly in the paragraph starting on page 25, line 11. The specification in the instant application requires a correction to follow the cited changes in the drawings. c. Any correction made on the applicant’s own volition in the parent application 09/602,527 should applied to the instant application. Appropriate correction is required.

(p. 2-3, Office Action 09/01/04)

In response the specification has been amended to address the noted informalities.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 8 and 17 due to informalities. The Examiner has stated

The word “software” should be inserted after the word “timetable” in line 1 of claim 8 to preserve the uniformity of the claim language. The word “model” in line 17 should be corrected to “module”. Appropriate correction is required.

(p. 3, Office Action 09/01/04)

In response claim 8 has been amended to address the noted informality and claim 17 has been canceled.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,298,274 of Inoue ("Inoue") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,928,389 of Jevtic ("Jevtic").

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Inoue in view of Jevtic. The Examiner has stated that

Inoue, a semiconductor wafer transport system, does not specify a cluster tool process format, however, it does read on the functionality of the following claims with regard to wafer transport: 1. A plurality of processing stations for processing wafers (column 1, lines 34-52), each processing station further comprising a process chamber (column 1, lines 23-33), a local clock coupled to the process chamber (column 4, lines 58-60); a master server in communication with the local clock in each processing station (column 3, lines 57-61), the master server including a master clock (it was well known in the art at the time the invention was made that computer as described at column 3, lines 57-61, would contain a clock that would dictate the passage of time on the master system).

(p. 4, Office Action 09/01/04)

Applicants respectfully submit, however, that amended claim 1 is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of Inoue, Jevtic, and Yokoyama. Amended claim 1 includes the following limitations.

A wafer cluster tool comprising:

 a plurality of processing stations for processing wafers, each processing station further comprising
 a process chamber,
 a local clock coupled to the process chamber;
 a master server in communication with the local clock in each processing station, the master server including
 a master clock
 timetable software, wherein the timetable software records a local time for each clock in the plurality of processing stations and
 scheduling software, the scheduling software having a pre-determined schedule for the cluster tool
 wherein the pre-determined schedule is periodic according to a fixed sending period such that the pre-determined schedule is identical in each sending period

and wherein the time recorded on the local clocks of each processing station and the master clock is measured in units of the sending period.

(Amended claim 1) (emphasis added).

In contrast, neither Inoue, Jevtic, nor Yokoyama disclose the disclose the limitations of a pre-determined schedule that is identical in each sending period and time recorded on local clocks of each processing station and the master clock measured in units of the sending period.

For these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is not obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of Inoue, Jevtic, and Yokoyama.

Given that claims 2 - 8 depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1, applicants submit that claims 2 - 8 are, likewise, not obvious under § 103 in view of the references cited by the Examiner.

It is respectfully submitted that in view of the amendments and arguments set forth herein, the applicable rejections and objections have been overcome. If there are any additional charges, please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any fee deficiency that may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

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By: 

Tom Van Zandt
Reg. No. 43,219

12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025
(408) 720-8300